Welfare and Rehabilitation of Ex-servicemen

324. SHRI KACHARU BHAU RAUT : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) the names of schemes being implemented by the Government for the welfare and rehabilitation of the ex-servicemen and dependents of deceased soldiers presenting in tribal, rural, backward and plateau region of Maharashtra;

(b) the year-wise amount spent on the welfare and rehabilitation of ex-servicemen/deceased soldiers during the last three years; and

(c) the number of persons benefited from these schemes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) to (c) The Central Government schemes and programmes for re-habilitation and welfare of ex-Servicemen are applicable to the ex-Servicemen residing in all the States including the State of Maharashtra and the tribal, rural, backward, plateau region of that State. The Central Government schemes/programmes are as under :

(i) Central Government has provided following percentage of reservation in Government jobs for ex-Servicemen :

	Central Government	Central PSUs/ Banks
Group 'C' posts	10%	14.5%
Group 'D' posts	20%	24.5%

(ii) Besides, in Para Military Forces, a reservation of 10% is also provided in posts of Assistant Commandants. Recruitment in Defence Security Corps is earmarked for ex-Servicemen.

(iii) Relaxation in age and educational qualifications for ex-Servicemen for employment in Government jobs.

(iv) Training programmes for improving their employability or to enable them to take self-employment after retirement.

(v) Loan facilities under SEMFEX-1, SEMFEX-II and SEMFEX-III Schemes for setting up self-employment ventures.

(vi) 7.5% of petroleum product agencies reserved for allotment to widows/dependents of posthumous gallantry award winners, war disabled, war widows etc.

(vii) Ex-Servicemen transport companies for transportation of bulk LPG/Coal.

(viii) Financial assistance to needy ex-Servicemen from Raksha Mantri's Discretionary Fund.

(ix) Reimbursement of 60% expenditure for treatment of serious diseases viz., Bypass surgery, kidney transplant, cancer etc., from the Armed Forces Flag Day Fund.

(x) 75% Concession in rail fare for travel in II class to war widows and 50% concession in fare for air travel in domestic flights of Indian Airlines to recipients of gallantry awards of Class I & II viz, PVC, MVC, Ashok Chakra and Kirti Chakra and to permanently war disabled officers and dependent members of their families.

(xi) Canteen facilities from the nearest Unit Run Canteens.

(xii) Free Medical facilities at existing Military Hospitals.

(xiii) Entitled to short stay in the Sainik Rest Houses.

(xiv) Educational concessions to the children of Armed Forces Personnel killed or disabled in action.

2. In addition to the above schemes, State Government of Maharashtra is giving a number of concessions and benefits to ex-Servicemen residing in this State.

3. Tribal, rural, backward and plateau region-wise information about the amount spent on rehabilitation and welfare schemes and the number of beneficiaries is not maintained. In the entire State of Maharashtra, a total of 646 and 861 ex-Servicemen were provided jobs during 1995 and 1996 respectively. During the last three financial years, a total of 415 ex-Servicemen have been provided loans/ financial assistance of about Rs. 209.02 lakhs under the SEMFEX schemes in the State. The medical facilities to ex-Servicemen are provided through a network of 12 Military Hospitals located in the State of Maharashtra. There are 26 Sainik Rest Houses in the State. During the last three years, 32 ex-Servicemen have been provided financial assistance of Rs. 6.10 lakhs from the Armed Forces Flag Day Fund and Raksha Mantri's Discretionary Fund for repair of houses, daughters' marriage, medical treatment etc. An expenditure of Rs. 1,04,535/- has been incurred under PEXSEM scheme in Maharashtra for training of ex-Servicemen during 1993-94 and 1994-95.

Compensation to the Legal Heirs of Non Resident Indians

325. SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that the compensation payable to the legal heirs of Non Resident Indians who dies in Gulf countries is being inordinately delayed by the sponsors in the Gulf countries;

(b) whether Indian missions in Gulf countries have been given directions to bring the matter into notice of the authorities of those countries; and

(c) the other steps proposed to be taken by the Government to effect the early payment of compensation to the legal heirs ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) to (c) From time to time, Government and Indian Missions receive representations from the next of kin of Indian Nationals who have died in Gulf countries. These representations relate to delay in payment of legal dues and death compensation. The representations are immediately acted upon and Indian Missions are under instructions to take up the matter with the concerned local authorities and the sponsors for completion of formalities. The Missions regularly follow up cases relating to compensation in accordance with the local laws. Death compensation and other legal dues collected from the concerned local authorities are forwarded by the Embassy to the heirs of the deceased through district authorities in India.

Funds for N.H. in Maharashtra

326. SHRI DATTA MEGHE : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) the amount of loans and advances received from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and other international Financial institutions for construction and maintenance/repair of National Highways/bridges in Maharashtra during the last three years;

(b) whether the total loan amount was spent for those very projects;

(c) if not, whether such loans and advances have been spent for some other purpose;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(e) the corrective measures being taken in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) and (b) Widening to four lanes and strengthening of existing two lanes of Manor Bassein Creek section (58 Kms) on NH 8 in Maharashtra is included in the loan agreement with the World Bank for US$ 306 million in respect of improvement of National Highway section in the States of Haryana, Punjab, Orissa, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal and reconstruction of bridge on State Roads in Orissa. The work on Maharashtra sub-project has not yet started and no loan amount has so far been spent on this work.

(c) to (e) Under the procedure of loan from International Financial institutions, the expenditure has to be first incurred on the project from budgetary allocation. Thereafter, claims of the expenditure are furnished to the respective financial institutions, who reimburse the amounts as admissible under the loan. Thus, there is no possibility of diversion of loan for some other purposes.

Lalit Kala Akademi

327. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) the grounds for taking over the administration of the Lalit Kala Akademi by the Government;

(b) the steps taken to bring to book those, who have been accused of corruption and mismanagement of the Akademi; and

(c) the changes in the structure of the Akademi proposed to prevent the recurrence of corruption and mismanagement in future ?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI) : (a) Lalit Kala Akademi's reluctance in accepting recommendations of the Haksar Committee which suggested structural changes in the set up of the Akademi, the findings of the preliminary enquiry into the affairs of the Akademi and the special audit ordered by the Government, Akademi's loss of public credibility etc. are the grounds for taking over the management of Lalit Kala Akademi.

(b) Government has already issued directives to the Administrator of the Akademi to take immediate follow-up actions against those who were found guilty in the preliminary enquiry report as well as the special audit report.

(c) In due course, the Government propose to reconstitute the General Council, Executive Board, Finance Committee etc., of the Lalit Kala Akademi in accordance with the recommendations of the Haksar Committee.

Indo-Israel Agreement

328. SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether India and Israel have signed four bilateral agreements during the recent visit of President Ezer Weizman; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) (i) Agreement on Technical Cooperation between the Governments of India and Israel, for promotion of their mutual technical cooperation, including by exchange of experts and provision of training opportunities.

(ii) Memorandum of Intent between the two Governments, for a joint high-tech agricultural demonstration cooperation project.

(iii) Umbrella Agreement on the Development of Cooperation in the field of Industrial and